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Northern Rocky Mountain Forest & Range Experiment Station

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PRODUCTION OF LUMBER, LATH, AND SHINGLES IN IDAHO AND MONTANA, 1940. 1/

The statistics presented in this summary of returns from manufacturers of lumber, lath, and shingles in Idaho and Montana are based on the annual lumber census inquiry conducted by the Forest Service in cooperation with the Bureau of the Census. All 1940 figures shown in this statement are preliminary and subject to possible corrections in the final report to be published by the Bureau of the Census.

In 1940, the total lumber cut in Idaho and Montana by 379 active mills each producing 50 M feet or more amounted to 1,098,940 M feet, an increase of 16.1 percent over the combined cut of these two states in 1939. Total production of lath increased from 49,905 M pieces in 1939 to 50,861 M pieces in 1940. The total quantity of shingles manufactured decreased from 46,749 squares in 1939 to 41,442 squares in 1940. However, as the 1940 cut of shingles in Montana exceeded that of the preceding year by 7.5 percent, all of this decline in shingle production occurred in Idaho.

The 1940 lumber production statistics by species for Idaho and Montana with comparative total cut figures for 1939 and 1938 are given in the following tables.

1/ By C. N. Whitney, special agent, Bureau of the Census, and associate forester, Northern Rocky Mountain Forest and Range Experiment Station.

Table 1.-Lumber cut by species, 1940, M feet b.m.
(Mills cutting 50 M or over)

Kind of wood	Idaho	Montana	Combined cut	
			Volume	Percent
Idaho white pine	421,698	26,962	448,660	40.8
Ponderosa pine	216,685	145,684	362,369	33.0
Douglas-fir	72,028	62,328	134,356	12.2
Western larch	28,036	75,493	103,529	9.4
White fir	16,498	87	16,585	1.5
Spruce	8,106	12,386	20,492	1.9
Cedar	7,528	154	7,682	0.7
Lodgepole pine	1,732	2,173	3,905	0.4
Hemlock	982	-	982	0.1
Cottonwood	357	23	380	1/
Total	773,650	325,290	1,098,940	100.0
Lath, M pieces	39,114	11,747	50,861	
Shingles, squares	30,869	10,573	41,442	

1/ Less than one tenth of one percent.

In addition to the 379 mills cutting 50 M feet and upward, 65 mills in Idaho and 90 Montana mills reported production amounting to less than 50 M each in 1940. The aggregate additional production reported by these very small mills, not covered by cut figures included in table 1, amounted to 1,520 M for Idaho and 1,858 M for Montana.

Table 2.-Comparative production for 1940, 1939, and 1938, lumber cut M feet b.m.

(Mills cutting less than 50 M feet excluded)

State	1940	1939	1938	Percent of increase or decrease	
				1939-1940	1938-1939
Idaho	773,650	675,165	570,571	+ 14.6	+ 18.3
Montana	325,290	271,096	221,579	+ 20.0	+ 22.3
Combined cut	1,098,940	946,261	792,150	+ 16.1	+ 19.5

The increased production reported for Idaho and Montana since 1938 has not resulted from any large increase in the number of mills operated, and during the past 3 years the relative proportion of the total lumber cut produced by the larger mills has shown very little variation from year to year. In 1940, 85.2 percent of the aggregate cut of 1,098,940 M was manufactured by 34 mills each cutting 5,000 M or over, and 14.8 percent by 345 mills of smaller capacity cutting from 50 M to 5,000 M during the year. In 1939, 85.8 percent of the total cut was produced by 35 mills cutting 5,000 M feet or more and 14.2 percent by 336 mills cutting less than 5,000 M board feet.